

**OT216**



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## **1-1 Lesson Goal.**

### **Genesis-Leviticus: God Builds a People For Himself - Lesson 1.**

#### **Genesis: The Book of Beginnings.**

#### **I Introduction.**

Our course starts with Genesis. The word "genesis" means "beginnings" which comes from the Greek title for the book. This is a story about beginnings. Moses is the writer of the book, and he has organized the book in a very careful way. It starts first with what we call the prologue, the story that many of us think of as the beginning of the Creation story, on the first day this, on the second day that, and so on, the story of how God created the world that we know, starting with light and ending up with human beings and their important role in taking care of this world.

Then there follows ten sections. When you read through Genesis you might not at first notice how these ten sections are labeled, but they are there. They indicate how Moses thought of the stories that make up the book of Genesis. We will talk about those ten sections. They come under the category of what is translated in some Bibles as "generations," in other Bibles as "origins," or in other Bibles as "lineage

#### **II Prologue: Story of Creation (1:1-2:4a).**

##### **A. Day One and Day Four.**

When we begin looking at the book of Genesis we observe that there is an overview. The overview starts with the very first words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth: 'And it ends in chapter 2 with the simple words in verse 3 of that chapter; It just says, "He rested from all the work of creating that he had done!"

What is in this overview? There is a pattern that Moses has organized this material in. If you look at your Bible where it says day one, it says that on that day God created light, "Let there be light." If you will skip down to where the description of what was created on day four, you will find that the verses devoted to day four describe the creation of the sun and the moon and the stars. In other words, light was created on the first day and then the things that give light from our point of view on the fourth day, the sun, moon, and stars.

##### **B. Day Two and Day Five.**

Look what was created on the second day: the sky and the seas. That is what the firmament language refers to in some of the translations: a space or barrier between all kinds of atmospheric water, and the waters that cover the sea, what we call the sky and the sea. This corresponds to what gets created on day five. On day five is the creation of the fish, all creatures that live in the sea, and then birds, in other words, the sky and the sea animals. So again, there is a correspondence.

### **C. Day Three and Day Six.**

Then finally, we start with day three on which was created dry land and plant life. We observe that it corresponds to day six, because on day six we have the description of the land animals eating those plants. Of course, the last of the land animals is human; we are at the end of the story. This is kind of interesting because it might well be that if a human had thought this up, as many humans did many creation stories in our world, the human might have said, "Well, I will put man at the beginning of the story. Men and women will be created first, not last"

But, God did it in the manner that much of science suggests and that Scripture makes very clear, progressing to a recent point in the whole story, from the whole big picture, where human beings are at the end of the entire process. This is quite interesting in terms of modern genetic study, where geneticists are fairly well-united in concluding that the people that we call human beings, that is, modern man, was created very recently. All human beings come from one woman many thousands of years ago, but certainly not anywhere near as old as the creation of many other forms of life.

### **D. Day Seven.**

It is also important even before we get to our description of the seventh day, which ends this account, to mention the fact the day" is used here in a somewhat specialized way. Note that these days appear to be chunks of time. The Bible can use "day "that way. It does structure the story with evening and morning, day one; and evening and morning, day two; and so on. But, it does that in correspondence to the usual normal system that the Israelites favor, thinking of the day as beginning with the conclusion of the prior day so that as the sun sets, at twilight the new day is beginning. This then becomes a framework for understanding the seventh day.

### **E. God Rested.**

We read that on the seventh day God had finished the work that He had been doing. And so on the seventh day, He rested from all His work and blessed the seventh day and made it holy. In other words, this story has been told not just to give an overview of the entire creation of things right through our own creation, but also to set the scene for a teaching about the Sabbath.

God Himself rested on the seventh day. Did He need to? Of course not. He is the last person who would need to rest, but He did it as an example for us. The story is told in such a way as to not merely give coverage to the general sense of things, but also provides the first kind of instruction about how humans are to behave. Human beings need rest. They need sleep at night and they need a day off once a week. God has ordained that it should be so. And if we believe the Bible, then we ought to be following it as one of the procedures that God has revealed to us.

## **III. Origin Stories of the Heavens and the Earth (2:4-4:26).**

After the material that goes from 1:1 to 2:4, we start with the so-called "generations, "or" origin stories, "or as one of the versions calls it, just "the account "This is the account of the heavens and the earth, when they were created. There are ten of these: this is the

account, this is the origin story, or this is the genealogy of. We are going to look at each of these ten divisions very briefly.

### **A. Garden of Eden.**

The first one is called the account of the heavens and the earth. This includes the story of the Garden of Eden and also of the first family. It goes to the end of chapter 4. The story of the Garden of Eden very obviously to any reader refocuses the way that the Creation story is told. The concern is not to give you a full picture of everything that happened, but to concentrate on humans and their relationship to God.

Here is where Adam and Eve come in and where we read about the garden into which God placed them. A beautiful place. Everything was provided for them, but with one big prohibition: "Don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

### **B. Good and Evil.**

Why would God do that? Isn't that the tree that he should have said, " ... be sure to eat"? Does he not want them to know good and evil? Isn't the difference between good and evil an ideal for people to have? Isn't that exactly the tree that God would send them to eat first? Now the answer comes in the meaning of the phrase "good and evil" in Hebrew. It has a little bit different sense. It is intended to be what is called in language study a "merism." A merism is a category of speech in which totality is expressed by polarity. So if you want to indicate the totality of something you might say, "It is as big as the east is from the west. "Or if you want to say God is everywhere you can say, "He is in the highest heaven or in the lowest hell. So "good and evil" means everything.

What God is forbidding is that human beings should know everything. And of course, that is exactly what Satan tries to get them to know. He says, "Hey, if you eat from that tree you will be like God (or like the gods):' It can be translated either way. In other words, he tempts Adam and Eve to want to know everything.

### **C. The Fall.**

Adam and Eve do eat of that tree eventually, and there comes the fall from God's grace and the entrance of sin into this world. Sin is disobedience of what God wants done. They really do get a knowledge of everything, not of course all knowledge, but knowledge of everything in the sense that human beings are characterized by knowing more than they can handle. This is the dilemma in which every human being lives. We know more than we can handle. We have the ability with our knowledge to do good things or horrible, evil things. The same skill that can create some kind of machine to do good can create some kind of machine to kill. The same ability to speak so as to encourage people is used so as to hurt them. The same interest level that gets us into art and creativity can get us into pornography and all kinds of other debauchery. We have more knowledge than we know how to handle.

### **D. You Will Surely Die.**

The other part of the prohibition says, " ... for when you will eat of it, you will surely die," means that human beings after the Fall live with mortality. And an awareness of that mortality. We live in a condition knowing that we are headed for death, and we have got to have some means to escape from death if we are going to continue in our relationship with God. In other words, the story points the way for the need for a Savior who can rescue from death, sin and death, sin producing more knowledge than we can handle and also mortality. This is the human condition described in that first origin story.

#### **IV. Origin Stories of the Family of Adam (5:1-6:8).**

Then in chapters 5, 6, and part of 7, we have the stories about Adam. These are called origin stories of Adam but go on to talk about Cain and Abel and what they do. It is noteworthy that they carry on the sin that Adam and Eve started. Cain kills Abel in jealousy. He kills him because his attitude toward worship was wrong. God did not accept it but did accept Abel's attitude toward worship. And from the beginning we see the sinfulness of the Garden of Eden manifest, carried on, through the lineage of the children.

#### **V. Origin Stories of Noah (6:9-9:29).**

##### **A. Noah.**

Then as time goes by, we come to the origin stories of Noah in chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9. These stories bring us to an account of how the earth had become largely inhabited, a lot more than it was in the very beginning in the Garden of Eden. We find among all of the people living on the earth at that time one righteous individual and his family. Imagine you have all this population, and people are doing things, and there is the beginning of technology and commerce as described in some of these chapters. And yet, God finds the wickedness of the earth so great that He determines to eliminate almost all its people. However, there is one man who is good and that is Noah.

Noah has always reminded people of the need to live righteously no matter what everybody else is doing. Noah is a character that many of us may have to identify with when it seems like our culture and the people we know are headed in directions, other than pleasing God. Noah reminds us that one lone individual makes a difference, one lone person and his family can take a stand and please God.

##### **B. The Flood.**

The Flood is the means that God chose to eliminate all but that first group, Noah and his wife and his three sons and their wives. Noah, by means of a huge boat-like box, preserved animal life and human life. Naturally, the fish did not have to be preserved, birds will do fine, and vegetation grows back rather easily. Yet, it is a story that is one of real faith, faith of a man who is the new representative of life on the earth, a man from whom the rest of us are descended. Noah's job was to please God by being faithful. He does this up until the time of the Flood, yet we should not think that because the Flood occurred, eliminating all those bad people, that humanity is then going to be just fine; everybody is going to be good because they are all descended from a good guy and his good family.

### **C. After the Flood.**

Noah, after the flood, gets drunk and his son Ham in some way debauches him. Though it is not exactly clear what that story means in every way, the fact that it says he saw his father's nakedness usually indicates something sexual. So human beings are back on the track of sinning and displeasing God. Again, the need for a Savior who can rescue from sin is evident in these stories.

### **VI. Origin Stories of Shem, Ham, Japheth (10:1-11:9).**

In chapters 10 and 11, we find the origin stories of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. We get a feel for the way that the nations of the world are becoming increasingly pagan and working away from God, and in that section of the book we have the story of the Tower of Babel, a story of people getting together to do their best to see if they can get up to heaven by building a tower to reach it. It seems to us a bit funny, but that is because in our age we know that by getting up somewhere high you do not automatically get to heaven. But for these people living on a plain the thought that you might somehow be able to do it, get up in the clouds and see the gods and live among them, was an idea that fascinated them and they tried it. There was no real threat to God in this, but there was a need to keep people from doing that. God in His grace did confuse the languages of the earth. God actually separated us one from another by linguistic barriers as one means of suppressing that kind of tendency, as foolish as it was and as it ought to be seen.

### **VII. Origin Stories of Shem (11:10-26).**

When you move on from there, you come to a very short section in chapter 11 called the origin stories of Shem, just focusing on his lineage compared to those of his brothers. It is that lineage from which will come then the people involved in the next group of stories that start with the end of chapter 11 and goes all the way to chapter 25.

### **IX. Origin Stories of Ishmael (25:12-18).**

After that we have in chapter 25 a very brief account of the story of Ishmael. He is the father, as it were, of the Arabs. And we should remember that from Abraham came not only the Jews but also the Arab nations.

### **X. Origin Stories of Isaac (25:19-35:29).**

Then we come to the stories of Isaac in chapters 25-35, which include stories about Jacob. There are interesting accounts of Jacob's travels, of his relationship to God, of his relationship to twelve sons, those we call the sons of "Israel "as his name was changed to, and thus the Israelites.

### **VIII. Origin Stories of Terah (11:27-25:11).**

These are called the origin stories, accounts, or genealogies of Terah. Now Terah is not a big character in the book, but he starts something because he is the father of Abraham. It is interesting to note in chapters 1-11 the whole history of the world as we know it, from its very origins down to about 2000 B.C., is covered. And then, it is as if the Bible story slows down, almost comes to a screeching halt, and goes in a more normal pace. We actually have more chapters devoted to the story of Abraham than we have to the whole history of our universe up until Abraham.

### **A. Abraham.**

Moses has designed this as God had inspired him, to give a rapid coverage with a certain sampling of the material and to really start the story with Abraham. The story of God's people begins with Abraham and, because it goes from chapters 11-25, it actually covers more space

than everything prior to that point. Abraham is a crucial figure. He is very important to the story, the story of the Bible, the story of Genesis as Moses has written it. The story especially concentrates in the early chapters on his call. Abraham is a person who responds to God and in that way is an example for every generation thereafter. God called him and he responded. Paul reminds us in the New Testament that Abraham believed God or trusted God, and that was what was accounted to him as righteousness.

### **B. Abraham's Faith.**

Was Abraham a perfect individual? Certainly not. Even though God had made His covenant with him in chapter 12 and given him promises in 12, 13, 15, and 17, Abraham was also a person whose faith wavered. He had strong faith, but, like all of us, his faith wavered. In chapter 12 and in chapter 20 we read about him being afraid when he is in a foreign land. Afraid maybe he will get into trouble because of his attractive wife, and maybe they will kill him and take her, so he lies about her and alleges that she is his sister. You can see his son, Isaac, did the same thing in Genesis 26. Nervous about what they will do to him because of his wife, Rebecca, he figures well, if it worked for my dad twice, maybe it will work for me once. These patriarchs, as we call them, were able people. They were powerful, they were strong in their determination, and they were strong in their faith. But their faith was not perfect. Like us, they were a mixture of faith and lack of faith.

## **XI. Origin Stories of Esau (36:1-37:1).**

This leads then to a brief account in chapter 36 of the origins of Esau. Jacob's brother Esau is the father of the Edomites. This again is another little instance in the book of Genesis, concern is shown not just for the Israelites but also for other people, Moses has paid attention to the Arabs and the Edomites, because God is a God of all peoples. Even in these ways the book of Genesis begins pointing us in the Bible story toward God's plan for all the world, not just for one particular people.

## **XII. Origin Stories of Jacob with Special Reference to Joseph (37:2-50:26).**

It is true God is going to work through one people; and He is especially going to do that in the remaining chapters of the book, starting in chapter 37 and going right to the end, chapter 50, with the stories of Joseph. Joseph is the key figure and the key statement is "God was with Joseph." He first was sold as a slave, then rose first in family service as a household servant. By God's grace, Joseph moved to civil service; finally coming into the position of being, in effect, the prime minister of Egypt. Joseph represents God's protection, benefit, provision, care, and the outworking of everything that started in the beginning of the book of Genesis.



God has a people. Now they are going to be cared for, protected, and placed in a situation where they can grow to be a huge nation. At the end of the book of Genesis we see thousands upon thousands of Israelites ready to go in a story that the book of Exodus will tell us about.

## **CHRONOLOGY.**

### **Creation to the Patriarchs (to 2200 B.C.).**

The earliest period of human history is recorded in the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis. The early sections of Genesis tell the story of Creation, the Fall, the spread of sin, the consequent flood, and the building of the Tower of Babel. Scholarly attempts to date these events are varied. The earliest events of world history took place during this period. Creation began by the word of God. Men and women were created in God's image. Adam and Eve were given a mandate to oversee the creation which God had made. However, sin entered the world through the Fall and quickly spread throughout the earth until God judged it by the Flood. After the Flood, Noah's descendants repopulated the earth but once again, were bent on self-service and sin. This was illustrated by the construction of the Tower of Babel, a monument built by men to exalt themselves against God. God undermined the project by interjecting a variety of languages, and consequently scattered the builders across the earth. This set the stage for God's plan of redemption which is recorded in Genesis 12 and begins the second era of biblical history, the time of the patriarchs.

Some scholars feel that the book of Job was written about events which transpired sometime during the latter part of the earliest period of biblical history. While Job was the first book to be written, it is listed eighteenth in the canon because the books of the Bible are organized topically, not chronologically. Since Job is considered poetry (wisdom literature), it is the first book listed in the poetry section of your Bible.

### **Era of the Patriarchs (2200 B.C. to 1800 B.C.).**

Genesis 12-50 describes in great detail God's work in forming a people for himself out of the family of Abraham. The events and key people which these chapters describe probably took place within the period from 2200 B.C.-1800 B.C. From the most recent archeological evidence it seems probable to place Abraham somewhere between 2200-1950 B.C. Isaac, c. 2050-1850 B.C., Jacob, c. 2000-1850 B.C. and Joseph, c. 1900-1800 B.C.

The majority of Genesis 37-50 tells the story of Joseph, who was sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers. Ultimately, by the mysterious providence of

God, Joseph rose to the second highest position in Egypt, reconciled with his brothers, and saved his entire family from the famine by moving them from Canaan to Goshen in Egypt. There the children of Israel multiplied and eventually became slaves of the Egyptians for over four hundred years.

### **Slavery, Exodus, Wandering and Conquest (1800 B.C. to 1390 B.C.).**

The third major period of Old Testament history is known as the Exodus and includes both the wandering in the wilderness, and the conquest of the promised land. Following the death of Joseph, the Jews were enslaved in Egypt and remained in that condition for over 400 years. Yet with the leadership of Moses, Israel departed Egypt probably between 1450-1440 B.C. This event, known as the Exodus and recorded for us in the book by that name, was the pivotal event in the early history of the Jews because it began their formation into a nation as the visible people of God.

However, due to their rebellion, the children of Israel wandered for forty years more in the desert of Sinai. It was during this time that they were given the Mosaic Law and the events described in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy took place. At the end of the forty years Moses died and was succeeded by Joshua. Under Joshua's leadership, Israel crossed the Jordan river and began in earnest the conquest of the land of Canaan.

### **Era of the Judges (1390 B.C. to 1050 B.C.).**

The fourth era of biblical history describes an intriguing period of national disunity known as the time of the judges. Following the death of Joshua, different judges ruled various parts of the land until the rise of the monarchy under King Saul, c. 1050 B.C. Two books tell the fascinating story of this period: Judges and Ruth. While the first few chapters of 1 Samuel overlap with this era, the focus of 1 Samuel is upon the fifth period of Israel's history, the rise of the monarchy.

### **Rise and Development of the Monarchy (1050 B.C. to 931 B.C.).**

The period of the monarchy was the golden age of ancient Israel. The three kings who came to the throne at this time—Saul, David, and Solomon—each ruled for almost forty years. During the early part of this era the Philistines were defeated, David inherited the crown after Saul's death, and he proceeded to conquer much of the surrounding territory. Upon David's death, Solomon inherited the throne and expanded Israel's boundaries to their greatest extent. Moreover, he built the first temple and gained an international reputation for his wisdom.

The era of the monarchy was rich in the composition of biblical literature. Many of the Psalms and Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes were written during this time, although the Psalms and Proverbs were not organized into a book until after the exile. In addition, the complete story of this period is told in the histories of 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles 1-9 and 1 Kings 1-11.

### **Divided Kingdom and Babylonian Captivity (931 B.C. to 538 B.C.).**

Following the reign of Solomon, the nation of Israel divided into the northern kingdom—Israel, and the southern kingdom—Judah. Israel was ruled by a variety of kings, most of them wicked, until its total destruction by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. Judah lasted a little

longer, despite the equivalent spiritual and moral incompetence of its own rulers. In 586 B.C., Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians and many of the people were taken into captivity for almost fifty years.

Despite the preponderance of kings during the time of the divided kingdom, the truly outstanding figures of this era were the prophets. Elijah, Elisha, Amos and Hosea prophesied to the northern kingdom, while Jonah was sent by God to the Assyrian city of Nineveh, and Obadiah prophesied against the nation of Edom. Micah, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Joel, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah all spoke on behalf of God to the rulers and people of Judah. Daniel and Ezekiel were God's prophets during the exile in Babylon, ministering to both the Jews and their conquerors. The content of the prophets' messages to their respective audiences is found in each of their books, including Jeremiah's Lamentations, while the historical account of the period is narrated in 1 Kings, 2 Kings, and 2 Chronicles.

### **Return from Exile (538 B.C. to 430 B.C.).**

The Persians conquered the Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C., and soon after that returned the exiles to the promised land. Led by Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, the Jews returned to Canaan in waves, reformed the temple worship, and eventually rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem. In addition, three prophets—Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi—all challenged the different groups of returning exiles to purify their lives and serve God fully. The account of their individual prophecies is contained in the books which bear their names and the historical record of the era is given in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

### **OLD TESTAMENT PEOPLE AND EVENTS People:**

**ADAM** - Adam was the first human created by God. He was placed in an ideal environment, assigned work to do, and granted a "suitable helper in Eve. Yet he rebelled against God's one restriction, resulting in separation from God.

**EVE** - Eve was the first woman created, being made by God from one of Adam's ribs. She was approached by the serpent and deceived into eating the forbidden fruit.

**CAIN** - Cain, the first son of Adam and Eve, is best known for murdering his brother Abel. Angry that his sacrifice was not accepted by God, Cain led Abel to the field where he killed him. In response, God assigned Cain to be a restless wanderer.

**ABEL** - The second son born to Adam and Eve, Abel is best remembered for being murdered by his older brother, Cain. While both Cain and Abel brought sacrifices to God one day, only Abel's was accepted. Cain became furious and, luring his brother out to a field, attacked Abel and killed him.

**NOAH** - In an evil time, Noah was a righteous man and found favor with God. God instructed Noah to build an ark, so that he and his family, along with the animals, would survive the flood.

**HAM** - Ham was Noah's youngest son. Sometime after the episode of the flood, Ham saw his father's nakedness, resulting in God cursing his descendants.

**SHEM** - Shem was Noah's of the Semitic race (Gen 11:10). He is listed in the genealogy of Christ (Luke 3:36).

**JAPHETH** - Japheth was Noah's oldest son, and the progenitor of the more remote northern peoples of SE Europe.

**ABRAHAM** - God called Abraham, the father of the people of God, out of an idolatrous background (cf. Joshua 24:2) to father the Hebrew nation. He constantly exhibited faith in God, trusting God to lead and provide.

**SARAH** - Sarah, Abraham's wife, was the mother of the chosen people. She was barren for many years until she gave birth to Isaac at about age 90.

**HAGAR** - Hagar was an Egyptian handmaid who, following the marital customs of the day, was given by Sarai to Abram (Gen. 16:1-16). She gave birth to Ishmael, the ancestor of the Arab peoples.

**ISHMAEL** - Ishmael was the son of Abraham by Hagar, the Egyptian handmaid of Sarah. Seen as a threat to Isaac's inheritance, Sarah urged Abraham to send him away along with Hagar.

**LOT** - Lot, Abraham's nephew, traveled with Abraham from Mesopotamia to the land of Canaan. Lot chose to live near the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and later escaped their judgment with only his two daughters. Through his daughters he fathered the nations of Moab and Ammon.

**ISAAC** - Isaac, the only son born to Abraham and Sarah, followed in his father's faith. He married Rebekah and fathered Esau and Jacob.

**REBEKAH** - Aiter Abraham's servant persuaded her to return with him from Haran, Rebekah became Isaac's wife. After their marriage, she was barren for twenty years, when God answered Jacob's prayer and she gave birth to twins, Esau and Jacob.

**JACOB** - Jacob, along with his twin brother Esau, was born to Isaac and Rebekkah. He tricked Esau out of the family birthright and blessing, forcing him to flee. He married Leah and Rachel, and together with them and their handmaids, fathered the twelve sons who would become the twelve tribes of Israel.

**ESAU** - Esau was the oldest of the twin brothers born to Isaac and Rebekah. However, he lost out on the family birthright and blessing through the trickery of his brother Jacob.

**LABAN** - Laban was Abraham's nephew who lived in Haran. He played a prominent role in the marriage of Rebekah, his sister, and Isaac, as well as the account of his two daughters, Leah and Rachel, marrying Jacob.

**LEAH** - Leah was Jacob's first wife, given to him by her father Laban. She birthed six sons, including Judah who is in the line of Christ, and one daughter.

**RACHEL** - Rachel was Jacob's second wife, but his first love. Barren for years, God heard her and she gave birth to Joseph and Benjamin. Rachel died while delivering Benjamin.

**THE 12 SONS OF JACOB** - With his two wives and their two handmaids, Jacob fathered twelve sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin.

**CHILDREN OF ISRAEL** - While enslaved in Egypt, the Israelites increased from seventy at the beginning to being "exceedingly numerous." (Ex. 1:7).

**EGYPTIANS** - The Egyptians at first welcomed the children of Israel, but later enslaved them to hard labor.

**MOSES** - Delivered at birth from certain death, Moses was shaped by Egyptian culture and by God to be a leader. He was God's human instrument to lead the nation Israel out of their slavery. Moses also guided the people through the Red Sea, communicated God's law to them, and lead them through the wilderness.

**AARON** - Aaron, Moses' older brother, served with Moses as spokesman to Pharaoh. During the wilderness wanderings, he assisted Moses in the leadership of the people. When the tabernacle was built, Aaron became the nation's first high priest.

**PHARAOH** - The nation of Egypt was invested in an individual, known as "Pharaoh." He was revered as a god.

**JOSHUA** - Joshua served as Moses' assistant during the forty years in the desert. Upon Moses' death, he was selected by God to assume the leadership of the nation. Under Joshua's command, Israel succeeded in conquering much of the land of Canaan.

**CALEB** - Caleb, along with Joshua, was only one of two spies to encourage the Israelites to take possession of the Promised Land. To reward his trust, God allowed Caleb to enter the land forty years later. At the age of 85, Caleb conquered Hebron and the hill country.

**OTHNIEL** - Othniel is the first judge listed in the book of Judges. He delivered Israel from the king of Aram, resulting in peace for 40 years.

**EHUD** - Ehud is the second judge listed in the book of Judges. A left-handed man, he killed Eglon, the king of Moab, delivering the Israelites from the Moabites.

**BARAK**- Barak went into battle against the Canaanites, but only after begging for support from the prophetess Deborah.

**DEBORAH** - Deborah was the fourth of Israel's judges. leadership, Israel defeated Jabin, a king of Canaan.

**RUTH** - A Moabitess, Ruth returned to Israel with her mother-in-law, Naomi, where she met and married Boaz. She is the great-grandmother of David and an ancestress of Jesus.

**TOLA**- Of the tribe of Issachar, Tola judged Israel 23 years. **JAIR** - Jair, a Gileadite, was a judge who seived 22 years.

**GIDEON** - Gideon seived as Israel's fifth judge. After twice making sure of God's decision with a wool fleece and letting God pare down his army, Gideon and three hundred men routed the Midianite army.

**SAMSON** - Samson was one of the last of Israel's judges. Although he was a slave to his passions, God used him to gain vengeance on the Philistines.

**ELI** - Eli was a judge and high priest in Beth Shalem who served when Samuel ministered as a boy. Although a godly man, Eli's sons were wicked men.

**SAMUEL** - Samuel is described as both a judge (1 Sam. 7:6,15-17) and a prophet (1 Sam. 3:20). As a young child, he heard God speak to him. Years later, God responded to Samuel's prayer, defeating the Philistines. Samuel poured oil on both Saul and David as God's anointed ones.

**SAUL** - Israel's first king, Saul reigned for forty years with less than full devotion to God. At the end of his reign, Saul jealously sought to kill David. He died in battle, along with three of his sons, falling on his own sword.

**DAVID** - David, Israel's second and greatest king, was the youngest son of his father Jesse. He reigned as king for forty years, expanding Israel's size and strength. Although David committed a series of moral failures, he is known for his love for God, being called "a man Mier God's own head."

**SOLOMON** - Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheba, was the third and last king of united Israel. During his reign, he oversaw the construction of the magnificent temple of God. Solomon was incredibly wise and wealthy, yet in his later years lost his spiritual discernment.

**JEREBOAM** - Jereboam was the first king of the northern kingdom known as Israel. Shortly after being selected to the position. Jereboam established two additional centers of worship.

**REHOBAM** - Rehoboam, a son of Solomon. was the first king of the southern kingdom known as Judah. Under his rule. Judah quickly shifted to pagan worship.

**ELIJAH** - Elijah was a prophet during the days of wicked King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. A man of prayer, he was God's instrument through which he displayed his power. Most notable was Elijah's "duel" with the prophets of Baal and Asherah on Mount Carmel.

**ELISHA** - Elisha was Elijah's successor as prophet of God. He had a long ministry that included helping a poor widow, bringing a boy back to life, and healing Naaman of leprosy.

**ISAIAH** - Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of four kings of Judah, from Uzziah to Hezekiah. He warned the nation of God's Assyrians and Babylonians. He also gave the people hope of the coming Messiah.

**JEREMIAH** - Jeremiah was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah. His ministry covered the last five kings of Judah and continued past the destruction of Jerusalem. He urged the people to return to God and let him change their hearts.

**NEBUCHADNEZZAR** - Nebuchadnezzar was the great king of the Babylonian Empire. Under his reign, Judah was defeated and carried away into captivity.

**DANIEL** - Daniel was among the select, youthful hostages of the first Jewish deportation, taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. Although in a foreign land, he continued to faithfully serve God. In his book, he relates several visions which have great significance to world history.

**EZEKIEL** - Ezekiel, a contemporary of Jeremiah and Daniel, prophesied before and after the destruction of Jerusalem. He was deported to Babylon in 597 B.C.

**CYRUS** - Cyrus, the king of Persia, defeated Babylon in 539 B.C. He allowed the Jews to return to their homeland.

**ZERUBBABEL** - Zerubbabel, the grandson of King Jehoiachin, was appointed governor of the returning Jews from Babylon. Upon returning to Jerusalem in 538 B.C., he helped to rebuild the altar and the temple.

**HAGGAI** - Haggai was a prophet who, along with Zechariah, encouraged the Jews to rebuild the temple.

**ZECHARIAH** - Zechariah, a prophet, returned from the Babylon captivity under the leadership of Zerubbabel. He was a contemporary of Haggai.

**EZRA** - Ezra, a descendant of Aaron the high priest, returned from Babylon to Jerusalem in 458 B.C. and initiated a religious reform.



**NEHEMIAH** - Nehemiah led the third group of exiles back to Jerusalem in 444 B.C. God used him to rebuild the city's walls and reorder the people's social and economic lives.

**AHASUERUS** - Ahasuerus, also known as Xerxes, reigned as king of Persia from 486 to 465 B.C.

**ESTHER** - Esther, raised by her cousin Mordecai, became the queen of Persia. Through her the Jewish people were spared persecution.

**MALACHI** - Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament, prophesied in the middle of the fifth century B.C. He spoke out against the sin and the apostasy of the people of Israel.

### **Events:**

**CREATION** - The creation of the heavens and the earth is described in Genesis 1:1-2:3. In six days God shaped the earth and filled it, pronouncing his work "very good." On the seventh day, God rested.

**FALL** - Although in an ideal environment, Adam and Eve rebelled, thus "falling" from their untarnished relationship with God.

**sin**, Adam and Eve tasted separation from God as well as the curses he placed on them in Genesis 3:16-19.

**SPREAD OF SIN** - Following the first sin in the garden of Eden, mankind increasingly rebelled against God. This wickedness was so great that God was grieved (Gen. 6:6).

**FLOOD** - The world's sinfulness had become so great that God was "grieved that he had made man on the earth" (Gen. 6:6). He sent an enormous flood that eradicated every creature except those with Noah in the ark.

**BABEL** - As the people of the world moved eastward, they decided to live in one place and erect a huge tower in order to make a name for themselves. God descended to them, confusing their language and scattering them abroad.

**GOD CHOOSES A NATION** - As mankind's sin increased, God selected one individual to father a nation which was to be set apart. God vowed to make Abraham into a great nation for the purpose of blessing all peoples on

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF ABRAHAM'S FAMILY: ISAAC & JACOB** - God's promises to Abraham continued through his descendants Isaac and Jacob.

**JOURNEY TO EGYPT** - When the eleven brothers discovered that Joseph was alive in Egypt, they moved to Egypt with their families to survive the famine. Scholars place this in the year 1876 B.C.

**THE DEATH OF JOSEPH** - Joseph died in Egypt at the age of 110. His last request was to have his bones buried in the Promised Land.

**430 YEARS OF SLAVERY**- The total length of time that the Israelites spent in Egypt was 430 years (Exodus 12:40). During much of that time, they served as slaves to the oppressive Egyptians.

**PLAGUES** - To persuade Pharaoh to release the Israelites, God sent a series of ten plagues that decimated the land. The plagues began with the Nile river turning to blood and ended with the death of every firstborn.

**EXODUS** - After the ten horrendous plagues, the Egyptians eagerly let the Israelites "exit." In addition to their freedom, the Egyptians gave them whatever they asked for.

**RED SEA** - With the Egyptian army in hot pursuit, God divided the water of the Red Sea, enabling the Israelites to pass through on dry ground. When the Israelites had crossed, the waters flowed back, engulfing the entire Egyptian army.

**MT. SINAI** - In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt, they camped at the base of Mount Sinai. On the top of Sinai, Moses met with God and received the Law.

**WANDERING** - Because of Israel's refusal to trust God for possession of the land, God sentenced them to wander in the desert for roughly 40 years. With the exceptions of Joshua and Caleb, that whole generation died during this wilderness wandering.

**CONQUEST** - After Israel's forty years in the wilderness the nation entered the Promised Land in 1406 B.C. Over the next seven years. Israel defeated most of the inhabiting peoples to assume possession.

**DEATH OF JOSHUA** - After a lifetime of serving God, Joshua died at the age of 110. He was buried in the land of Israel.

**JUDGES** - Between the Joshua and the times of the kings, Israel was ruled by men and women known as judges. Twelve are recorded in the book of Judges, including Deborah, Gideon, and Samson.

**UNITED MONARCHY** - Saul, David, and Solomon comprise the three kings who governed over the united monarchy. Together they reigned for 120 years. After Solomon, the country split into two factions, Israel and Judah.

**SAUL'S REIGN** - Saul reigned as the first king of Israel (1050-1010 B.C.). His rule was marked by failure to trust God and jealousy of David.

**SAUL'S DEATH & DAVID'S ASCENSION** - Wounded in battle, Saul took his own life by falling on his sword. David was first anointed as king of Judah and then all of Israel.

**DAVID'S RULE** - David's reign was marked by righteousness and military victory. He served as king from 1010-970 B.C.

**DAVID'S SIN** - David committed adultery with Bathsheba and tried to cover it up by having her husband Uriah killed. When confronted by Nathan the prophet, he confessed and repented.

**CIVIL WAR & SOLOMON'S ASCENSION** - David's son Absalom usurped the throne, but was soon killed in battle. Another son, Adonijah, later attempted to assume the throne, but David affirmed Solomon as his choice.

**FIRST TEMPLE BUILT** - Solomon orchestrated the construction of a magnificent temple to God. It took seven years to build, being completed in Solomon's eleventh year (c. 950 B.C.).

**SOLOMON'S EXPANSION & BUILDING PROGRAMS** - In addition to the temple, Solomon undertook other construction projects including a palace which took thirteen years to complete. Also, under his leadership, Israel expanded her borders considerably.

**DIVIDED KINGDOM** - After King Solomon's reign, the nation of Israel divided into two separate kingdoms. The northern ten tribes united and were called Israel, or Ephraim, the largest of those tribes. The southern kingdom was comprised of Judah and Benjamin, and was called Judah.

**ASSYRIAN CONQUEST OF ISRAEL** - After extended warfare, Assyria conquered the northern kingdom (Israel) in 722 B.C. The Assyrians were a cruel military power who subdued conquered nations by deporting their peoples and making them resettle outside of their homelands.

**BABYLON CAPTURES ASSYRIA** - Babylon conquered Assyria in 612 B.C., when the capital city of Nineveh fell. At that point Babylon assumed the role as the dominant power of that day.

**BABYLON CAPTURES JUDAH** - The Babylonian army subjugated Judah in 605 B.C. At that time, Nebuchadnezzar carried off to Babylon the treasures of the temple and members of the nobility. The city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

**BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH** - Judah, the southern kingdom, was taken captive by the Babylonians in 605 B.C. On three occasions, the Babylonians deported and exiled many of the Jews (including the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel) to Babylon.

**JERUSALEM DESTROYED** - The city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. The temple was burned and the city walls broken down.

**EXILE** - When Judah was defeated, many of the Jews were deported to Babylon. This exile lasted roughly 70 years as prophesied by Jeremiah.

**MEDO-PERSIANS OVERTHROW BABYLON** - In 539 B.C., Babylon fell to Cyrus king of Persia. Cyrus issued a decree allowing the Israelites to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple.

**ZERUBBABEL LEADS THE FIRST RETURN** - After Cyrus' decree permitting the Israelites to return, Zerubbabel led roughly 43,000 back to Jerusalem. Their focus was in rebuilding the temple.

**TEMPLE REBUILT** - Despite opposition, Zerubbabel and other returned exiles rebuilt a simple and less expensive version of Solomon's temple in 516 B.C.

**NEHEMIAH RETURNS TO REBUILD JERUSALEM WALLS** - The third return of exiles from Babylon occurred in 444 B.C., led by Nehemiah. Despite opposition, Nehemiah rallied the people to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

**OLD TESTAMENT CLOSES** - For all practical purposes the Old Testament closed with Malachi's writing of his book around the year 430 B.C. After that are often what are called the 400 silent years.

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1-5\_A01-When It All Began.

### **When It All Began - Genesis 1.**

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth....God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. (Gen. 1:1, 31).

Everything, truly everything, begins here. The story of the Bible? more, the history of the universe? with the simple statement, "In the beginning God created," and the rest of the chapter fills in what he created: stars, oceans, plants, birds, fish, mammals, and finally man and woman.

Genesis 1 says little about the processes God used in creation; you'll find no explanations of DNA or the scientific principles behind creation. But the opening chapter of the Bible does insist on two facts:

Creation was God's work. "And God said. . . . And God said. . . . And God said"? the phrase beats in cadence all the way through the chapter, a chapter that mentions the word God thirty times. And in this first chapter, the very first glimpse we have of God is as an artist. Butterflies, waterfalls, bottlenose dolphins, praying mantises, kangaroos? they were all his idea. This entire magnificent world we live in is the product of his creative work. God, no one else, is the master of the universe, and all that follows in the Bible reinforces the message of Genesis 1: Behind all of history, there is God.

Creation was good. Another sentence tolls softly, like a bell, throughout this chapter: "And God saw that it was good." In our day, we hear alarming reports about nature: the ozone layer, polluted oceans, vanishing species, the destruction of rain forests. Much has changed, much has been spoiled since that first moment of creation. Genesis 1 describes the world as God wanted it, before any spoiling. Whatever beauty we sense in nature today is a faint echo of that pristine state.

Captain Frank Borman, one of America's Apollo astronauts, read this chapter on a telecast from outer space on Christmas Eve. As he gazed out of his window, he saw earth as a brightly colored ball hanging alone in the darkness of space. It looked at once awesomely beautiful, and terribly fragile. It looked like the view from Genesis 1.

Life Question: When was the last time you noticed, really noticed, the beauty of the natural world?

### **The Crash - Genesis 3**

But God did say, "You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die." (Gen. 3:3)

"The fall of man" theologians call it, but really it was more like a crash. Adam and Eve had everything a person could want in Paradise, and yet still a thought nagged them, "Are we somehow missing out? Is God keeping something from us?" Like any human being, like every human being who has ever lived, they could not resist the temptation to reach for what lay beyond them.

"There is only one doctrine that can be empirically verified," said George Bernard Shaw, "the doctrine of original sin." Genesis gives few details about that first sin. Only one thing mattered: God had labeled one tree, just one, off-limits. Many people mistakenly assume sex was involved, but in fact something far more basic was at stake. The real issue was: Who will set the rules—the humans or God? Adam and Eve decided in favor of themselves, and the world has never been the same.

Adam and Eve reacted to their sin like anybody reacts to sin. They rationalized, explained themselves, and looked for someone else to take the blame. The author of Genesis pointedly notes that they also felt the need to hide. They hid from each other, sensing for the first time a feeling of shame over their nakedness. Perhaps the greatest change of all, however, occurred in their relationship with God. Previously they had walked and talked with God in the Garden as a friend. Now, when they heard him, they hid.

Genesis 3 tells of other profound changes that affected the world when the creatures chose against their Creator. Suffering multiplied, work became harder, and a new word, death, entered human vocabulary. Perfection was permanently spoiled.

The underlying message of Genesis goes against some common assumptions about human history. According to these chapters, the world and humanity have not been gradually evolving toward a better state. Long ago, we wrecked against the rocks of our own pride and stubbornness. We're still bearing the consequences: all wars, all violence, all broken relationships, all grief and sadness trace back to that one monumental day in the Garden of Eden.

Life Question: Have you ever felt hemmed-in or stifled by one of God's commands? How did you respond?

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1-5\_B02-HumanCloseUp.

## **Human Close Up - Genesis 2.**

The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. (Gen. 2:7).

After presenting the cosmic view in chapter 1, Genesis 2 repeats the story of creation, narrowing the focus to human beings. We alone, of all God's works, are made "in God's image." People have disagreed over the years on what, exactly, that phrase "image of God" means. Is it immortality? Intelligence?

Creativity? Relationship? Perhaps the best way to understand is to think of "the image of God" as a mirror. God created us so that when he looked upon us he would see reflected something of himself.

Genesis makes the point that human beings are profoundly different from all of God's other creations. We recognize that difference instinctively: You won't go to jail for running over a dog or cat, but you might go to jail for running over a man or woman. Human life is somehow different, more "sacred." Alone of all creation, human beings received the breath of life from God himself.

Genesis 2 shows human history just getting underway. Marriage begins here. Even in a state of perfection, Adam felt loneliness and desire, and God provided woman. From then on, marriage would take priority over all other relationships.

Work begins here, too. Adam was set in a role of authority over the animals and plants. He named them and tended to the plants and creatures of the Garden. Ever since, humans have had a kind of mastery over the rest of creation.

Only the slightest hint of foreboding clouds this blissful scene of Paradise. It appears in verse 17, in the form of a single negative command from God. Adam enjoyed perfect freedom, with this one small exception a test of obedience.

Throughout history, artists have tried to recreate in words and images what a perfect world would look like, a world of love and beauty, a world without guilt or suffering or shame.

Genesis 1:2 describes such a world. For a time, peace reigned. When God looked at all he had created, he paid humanity its highest compliment. "Very good," he pronounced. Creation was now complete.

Life Question: If you could design a paradise, what would it look like?



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1-5\_B03-CrouchingAtTheDoor.

### **Crouching at the Door - Genesis 4:1-24.**

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? . . . If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." (Gen. 4:6-7)

Creation, the origins of man and woman, a fall into sin-in three chapters Genesis has set the stage for human history, and now that history begins to play itself out. The first childbirth-imagine the shock!-the first formal worship, the first division of labor, the first extended families and cities and signs of culture all appear in chapter 4. But one "first" overshadows all the others: the first death of a human being, a death by murder.

It took just one generation for sin to enter the world, and by the second generation people were already killing each other; the malignant results of the Fall spread that quickly. The early part of Genesis shows God intervening often in response. Here, unable to ignore the horrible changes that have crept into his world, God steps in once again with a custom-designed punishment. Cain was to bear the resulting mark with shame the rest of his life, but a few generations later a man named Lamech would brag about his murders.

Not all the news was bad. Civilization progressed rather quickly, with some people learning agriculture, some choosing to work with tools of bronze and iron, and some discovering music and the arts. In this way, human beings began to fulfill the role assigned them as masters over the created world. But despite these advances, history was sliding along another track as well. Every person who followed Adam and Eve faced the same choice of whether or not to obey God's word. And, with numbing monotony, all chose like their original parents.

God's warning to Cain applied to everyone who followed down through the generations. The next few chapters tell of an ever-worsening spiral of rebellion and evil.

Life Question: Note Cain's response when God confronted him. What do you think you would say if God appeared in person to confront you over some sin?

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1-5\_B04-UnderWater.

### **Under Water - Genesis 7.**

Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made. (Gen. 7:4).

The downward cycle of sin and rebellion continued until, finally, God reached a fateful decision. Genesis 6 records it in what is surely the most poignant sentence ever written, "The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain." It seemed clear that the human experiment had failed. God, who had taken such pride in his creation, was now ready to destroy it. He could no longer tolerate the violence that had spread across his world.

Legends of a great flood exist in the records of cultures in the Middle East, in Asia, and in South America. One Babylonian document in particular ("The Epic of Gilgamesh") has many parallels to the account in this chapter. But Genesis presents the flood not merely as an accident of geography or climate; it was an act of God. The churning waters described in this chapter stand as a symbol of how far humankind had fallen. Torrents of water swept through towns and cities, forests and deserts, destroying every living or man-made thing.

Yet Noah's ark, a huge, ungainly boat riding out the storm, stands as a symbol too: a symbol of mercy. God had resolved to give earth a second chance, which explains why he ordered Noah to meticulously preserve representatives from every species.

Genesis underscores one message above all: The first human beings on earth made a mess of things. Beginning with the rebellion in Genesis 3, the humans had brought on the downfall of all creation. And when the time of judgment came, only eight survived: Noah and his wife and their sons and wives.

Life Question: Many people have the idea that human nature is basically good. Do you agree?

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1-5\_B06-ThePlan.

### **The Plan - Genesis 15.**

After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision. (Gen. 15:1).

Many times God had intervened directly in human history, but almost always for the sake of punishment, in Adam's day, and Cain's, and in the days of Noah, and at Babel. After scanning these centuries of dismal failure, Genesis changes dramatically at chapter 12. It leaves the big picture of world history and settles on one lonely individual, not a great king or a wealthy landowner, but a childless nomad named Abraham.

It's almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of Abraham in the Bible. To the Jews, he represents the father of a nation, but to all of us he represents far more. He became a singular man of faith whose relationship to God was so close that for many centuries God himself was known as "the God of Abraham."

In effect, God was narrowing the scope of his activity on earth by separating out one group of people he could have a unique relationship with. They would be set apart from other men and women as God's peculiar treasures, his kingdom of priests. This special group would by example teach the rest of the world the advantages of loving and serving God. And Abraham was the father of this new humanity.

Dozens of other passages in the Old Testament set forth the details of God's covenant, or contract, with his chosen people. (The word testament means covenant.).

Here is what God promised Abraham: A new land to live in. Trusting God, Abraham left his home and traveled hundreds of miles toward Canaan. A large and prosperous family. This dream obsessed Abraham and, when its fulfillment seemed long in coming, tested his faith severely. A great nation. It took many centuries after Abraham for this promise to come true, but finally, in the days of David and Solomon, the Hebrews at last became a nation. A blessing to the whole world. From the beginning, God made clear that he chose the Hebrew people not as an end, but as a means to the end goal of reaching other nations.

Life Question: Do people still rely on "covenants," or contracts today? What purpose do they serve?

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1-5\_B07-SodomAndGomorrah.

### **Sodom & Gomorrah - Genesis 19.**

We are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it. (Gen. 19:13).

Like a photo negative, this chapter shows by contrast what Abraham was up against in his efforts to found a new and godly nation. His own nephew lived in the city of Sodom, a sordid place that looked on visiting strangers, angels, as it turned out, as prime targets for gang rape. Sexual violence was just one of Sodom's problems; Ezekiel 16:49 says that Sodom was "arrogant, overfed, and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy."

Despite Sodom's woeful condition, God was willing to let the city survive if Abraham could locate a mere ten righteous people there. Ten such people did not exist, and God's patience finally ran out. Once more he stepped in with direct punishment, not to destroy the whole world, but to wipe out two centers of evil.

In typical style, the Bible doesn't bother with scientific explanations of the destruction. Was it a volcanic eruption? The Bible does not say, and the area, now apparently at the bottom of the Dead Sea, cannot easily be investigated. Genesis stresses not how it happened, but why.

According to this chapter, Lot did not learn a lesson from Sodom. Later, in a drunken state, he committed incest with his daughters, producing two family lines that would be traditional enemies of Abraham's family, the Jews.

Jesus later used the account of Sodom and Gomorrah as a warning to people who saw his miracles but ignored them (Matthew 11). God may not always intervene so spectacularly, but this story serves as a warning that his tolerance for evil has a limit.

Life Question: Are any catastrophes of our time punishments from God? How would you know?

**Final Exam - Genesis 22:1-19**

Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." (Gen. 22:2).

Abraham is renowned for his faith, but that faith didn't come easily. Although God had shown Abraham his overall plan for the future in spectacular fashion, the actual working out of that plan included many bumps and pitfalls.

God had promised Abraham many descendants, which led to a crisis of faith. Nothing gave Abraham more delight than thoughts of his children at play. But was that promise a cruel joke God had dangled before him? At eighty-five, Abraham gave up on his wife and slept with a female servant. At least he would have one child he could call his own. Then, at ninety-nine, when God reconfirmed the original promise, Abraham laughed in God's face. Sarah pregnant at ninety?

Whatever did God want? He wanted faith, the Bible says, which means complete trust against all odds, and Abraham finally learned that lesson. God kept his promise and a son was born to Abraham and Sarah. They never lived to see their descendants multiply like the stars in the sky. But they had one beloved son, whom they named Isaac, or "laughter," as if to remind them of the very absurdity, the miracle, of childbirth at their ages.

Then God presented a final test of faith, a trial so severe that it made the others seem like kindergarten games. The Bible makes clear that God never intended to let Abraham go through with his plan of child sacrifice. (Years later, when the Israelites actually committed infant sacrifice, God would call it "something I did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind," Jeremiah 19.) All along, God had provided another sacrifice, a ram caught by its horns nearby. But Abraham did not know these things as he climbed the steep mountain with his only son.

Too many times Abraham had doubted God?this time he would obey no matter what. It had taken more than a hundred years, but Abraham finally learned to trust. Ever since, he's been known as a man of faith.

Life Question: What is the hardest "test of faith" you have eve been through?

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1-5\_B09-TheCheater.

### **The Cheater - Genesis 27:1-38**

Esau said, "Isn't he rightly named Jacob? He has deceived me these two times: He took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!" (Gen. 27:36).

If Abraham is renowned for faith, his grandson Jacob is renowned for treachery. A twin, he was born with one hand grasping the heel of his brother who preceded him, and his parents memorialized that scene by giving him a name meaning "he grasps the heel," or "he deceives."

In ancient times, the oldest son had two clear advantages: He would receive the family birthright and the father's blessing. The birthright, like an inheritance document, granted the right to be in charge of the family and its property. Jacob got the birthright away from Esau by striking a bargain with his brother who was on the verge of starvation (chapter 25).

For most people of that day, the blessing represented a kind of magical power that conveyed prosperity from one generation to another; for Isaac, it represented far more. He was transferring to his son the covenant blessing passed down from his father Abraham, a blessing that would one day produce a whole nation of God's favored people. This chapter records one of Jacob's most elaborate tricks: a ruse to get from his tottery father the blessing that rightfully belonged to his elder brother.

As you read these stories, you might find your sympathies leaning toward poor Esau, who got tricked out of his blessing and sold his birthright for a hot meal. But the Bible comes down clearly on the side of Jacob. Esau is blamed for "despising his birthright" (Genesis 25:34; Hebrews 12:16).

Jacob, willing to lie, cheat, and steal to get in on God's blessing, would have flunked anyone's morality test (Genesis surely does not commend those tricks-Jacob had to pay dearly for them). Yet his life offers up an important lesson: God can deal with anyone, no matter how flawed, who passionately pursues him. The story of Jacob gives hope to imperfect people everywhere.

Life Question: In Old Testament times, names like Isaac ("laughter") or Jacob ("grasper") carried great significance. What kind of descriptive name would fit you?

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1-5\_B10-SomethingUndeserved.

### **Something Undeserved - Genesis 28:10-22; 32:22-32.**

I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go. . . . I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.(Gen. 28:15).

In Romans 9, the apostle Paul uses Jacob as an example of God's grace. Why would God choose a cheating rascal like Jacob to carry out his plan of building a holy nation? "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion" is God's answer. Paul loved the word grace-it means "an undeserved gift"-because he had spent the first part of his life fighting against God's will, and yet God loved him anyway.

These two scenes show grace at work in the life of Jacob. At critical moments in Jacob's life, just as he was about to lose heart, God met him in dramatic personal encounters.

The first time, Jacob was crossing a desert alone as a fugitive. Having cheated his brother out of the family birthright, he was running away from Esau and his murderous threats. Yet God came to him with bright promises, not the reproaches he deserved. Jacob had not sought God; rather, God sought him. At that tender moment, God confirmed that all the blessings he had promised Abraham would apply to Jacob, the disgraced runaway.

The next encounter occurred several decades later, the night before Jacob was to attempt a reconciliation with Esau. In the intervening years, he had prospered and had learned many hard lessons, but as he thought about the rendezvous he trembled in fear. After pleading with God to keep his promises, he received in response a supernatural encounter as strange as any in the Bible. Jacob, the grasper, had met a worthy opponent at last: He was wrestling with God himself. After that strange night, Jacob always walked with a limp, a permanent reminder of the struggle.

Along the way, Jacob picked up a new name, "Israel," a name that put the final seal of God's grace on him. Jacob the cheat became the namesake of God's chosen people, the "Israelites."

Life Question: Not many people have such dramatic encounters with God. How has God met you at a time of need?

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1-5\_B11-BloodBrothers.

### **Blood Brothers - Genesis 37.**

Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of the cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams. (Gen. 37:20).

Nobody fights like brothers and sisters-family closeness seems to rub salt in the wounds of relationships. Genesis tells of several great brotherly rivalries: Cain and Abel, Isaac and his half-brother Ishmael, Jacob and Esau. In this last story, Joseph's story, eleven brothers lined up against one.

The pace of Genesis slows down when it gets to Joseph, with the book devoting far more attention to his life story than anyone else's. Little wonder-Joseph lived one of the great adventure stories of history. A stowaway, slave, and condemned prisoner, he rose to become the number-two ruler of the greatest empire on earth. The saga all began with the near-tragic event recorded in this chapter.

As his father's acknowledged favorite, Joseph seemed curiously insensitive to the potential of his brothers' jealousy. He may even have been flaunting status by relating two dreams of his family bowing down to him. At the least, he alienated his brothers so strongly that they decided to take revenge.

The brothers' first plan involved murder. As a last-second thought, they sold Joseph instead to traveling merchants on their way to Egypt. Neither the brothers nor Joseph's grieving father, Jacob-he swallowed their story of a wild animal attack-ever expected to see him again.

God, however, had other plans. Joseph's strange dreams, which got him into so much trouble at home, would prove to be his salvation in the faraway land of Egypt.

Life Question: Have you ever experienced God bringing good out of what at first seemed like a disaster?



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1-5\_B12-BehindTheScenes.

### **Behind the Scenes - Genesis 41:1-43.**

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard . . . that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." "I cannot do it," Joseph replied . . . "but God will give Pharaoh the answer." (Gen. 41:15-16).

Genesis provides a fascinating look at a variety of ways in which God gave guidance to his people. Sometimes, as with Abraham, he would appear spectacularly and in person, or send angelic messengers. For other people, like Jacob, the guidance came in more mysterious forms: a late-night wrestling match, a dream of a ladder reaching into heaven. For Joseph, God's guidance was indirect, and probably quite mystifying.

God communicated to Joseph not through angels, but mainly through dreams, weird dreams he would hear about from such dubious sources as jail mates and a despotic Egyptian pharaoh. Yet because God revealed to Joseph the proper meaning of those dreams Joseph eventually rose to prominence. Egyptians of that day were fascinated by dreams (Archaeologists have unearthed lengthy textbooks on dream interpretations.), and Joseph the dream-interpreter soon found himself at the top of Pharaoh's government.

In Joseph's time, God mostly worked behind the scenes. In fact, on the surface it often seemed that Joseph got the exact opposite of what he deserved. He explained a dream to his brothers, and they threw him in a cistern. He resisted a sexual advance and landed in an Egyptian prison. He interpreted another dream to save a cellmate's life, and the cellmate forgot about him.

Yet, and perhaps this is why Genesis devotes so much space to him, Joseph never stopped trusting God. Joseph came to see God's hand in the tragedies of his life. Being sold into slavery, for example, eventually turned out for good. It led him into a powerful new career, and the opportunity to save his own family from starvation. "So then," he told his brothers, "it was not you who sent me here, but God" (45:8). Choking back tears, Joseph tried to explain his faith to the same brothers who had tried to kill him, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good. . ." (50:20).

Life Question: If God has an important message for you, how does he get it across or get your attention so you will understand it?

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1-5\_B13-LongForegiveness.

### **A Long Forgiveness - Genesis 45:1-46:4.**

I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. (Genesis. 45:4-5).

The old, lingering rivalry between Joseph and his brothers came to a climax as the brothers knelt unwittingly before Joseph so Egyptian by now as to be unrecognizable-and begged for the right to buy food. Thus began a long, anguished struggle of the heart.

Joseph could have disclosed his identity and made up with his brothers or he could have gotten revenge by ordering their executions. He did neither. He began a series of elaborate tests, demanding things from them, playing tricks on them, accusing them for nearly two years. All these games brought his brothers, confusion and fear, and also flashbacks of guilt over their treatment of him years ago.

The drama took an emotional toll on Joseph. Five times he broke into tears, once with cries loud enough to be overheard in the next room. Joseph was feeling the awful strain of forgiveness. Finally, the brothers discovered the stunning truth: The teenager they had sold as a slave, and nearly killed, was now the second-ranking imperial official of Egypt. He held their fate in his hands.

But Joseph had no interest in revenge. At long last he was ready to forgive and welcome them all to Egypt. The brothers' reconciliation opened the way for the children of Israel to become one family of twelve tribes, a single nation. The old man Jacob, back home in Palestine, didn't know what to believe when he heard the news about his "dead" son. But, spurred on by one last personal revelation from God, he, too, headed off for Egypt.

A large family, a nation, a land-God had promised all these to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob. As Genesis closes, only the first of the promises has come true: Jacob's twelve sons have produced a flock of children. The Bible makes plain that these twelve were no more holy than any other sons-eleven of them, after all, had betrayed Joseph. But from this starting point, God would build his nation.

Life Question: What makes it so hard for us to forgive others?

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1-06\_Cannon Quiz.

**CANON: REVIEW.**

1. How many books do both Protestants and Roman Catholics agree comprise the Old Testament?
2. What is the standard a book must meet in order to be recognized as canonical?
3. What New Testament verse speaks about all the Scriptures (referring to the Old Testament) as "God-breathed" or inspired?
4. How was the Old Testament canon formed?
  - A. By an official declaration of a church council.
  - B. By a decree from the high priest of the nation of Israel.
  - C. As a process of God's people, as a community, recognizing books that were the word of God.
  - D. When each individual believer decided which books to follow.
5. Who wrote the first book to be recognized as canonical by the Hebrew people?
6. What two things do we mean when we say the Bible is canonical?
7. What three tests finally confirm the inspiration and, therefore, the canonicity of a book?
8. How many books from the Apocrypha were declared canonical by the Roman Catholic church?
9. What is the alternative term used to describe the Apocryphal books?
10. The name of the Greek version of the Old Testament is:
  - A. Susanna.
  - B. Septuagint.
  - C. Second Maccabees.
  - D. Second Esdras.

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Chapter Summaries.

Genesis.

Genesis 1..

- The Account of Creation .

Genesis 2.

- The Man and Woman in Eden.

Genesis 3.

- The Man and Woman in Sin.

Genesis 4.

- Cain, Abel, and Seth.  
Cain, Able, Enoch, Tubal-cain.

Genesis 5.

- From Adam to Noah.  
Seth, Enoch, Enoch took by God, Mathusa, Noah.

Genesis 6.

- Giants Were In The Earth.  
• Noah And The Flood.  
Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth, Ark..

Genesis 7.

- The Flood Comes To Earth.

Genesis 8.

- The Flood Recends.  
12.5 months in boat.  
Cain, Abel, and Seth.

Genesis 9.

- God's Covenant with Noah.,  
Animals to eat, Covenant.  
Canaan son of Ham.  
Curse sons of Ham (Canaanites).

Genesis 10.

- God's Covenant with Noah.,  
Sons of Noah = **Shem, Ham, Japheth**.  
Sons of Ham = **Cush, Mizraim, Put, Canaan**.  
Sons of Canaan were cursed (Canaanites).

One of Cush's descendants was Nimrod.

Genesis 11.

- The Tower Of Babel.
- Sons of.
- From Shem To Abram.
- Terah, Abram, Lot.

Genesis 12.

- The Call Of Abram.
  - **Abram And Sarai** In Egypt.
- Sarai and Pharaoh.

Genesis 13.

- Abram And Lot Separate.

Genesis 14.

- Abram Rescues Lot.
- Melchizedek Blesses Abram.

Genesis 15.

- The Lord's Covenant With Abram.
- Promise Of Son.

Genesis 16.

- The Birth Of Ishmael.

Genesis 17.

- Abram Is Named Abraham.
  - The Sign Of Circumcision.
- Abrahamic Covenant.
- Sarai Is Named Sarah.

Genesis 18.

- A Son Promised To Sarah in 1 year.
- Abraham Intercedes For Sodom.

Genesis 19.

- Sodom And Gomorrah Destroyed.
- Sex with angels.
- Lot And His Daughters.
- Incest of father and daughters.

Genesis 20.

- Abraham Deceives Abimelech.

Genesis 21.

- The Birth Of Isaac.
  - **Abraham's Children = Ishmael, Isaac.**
  - Hagar And Ishmael Sent Away.
  - A Treaty With Abimelech.
- Well of Beersheba.

Genesis 22.

- Abraham's Obedience Tested.

Genesis 23.

- The Burial Of Sarah.

Genesis 24.

- **Isaac Marries Rebekah.**
- **Isaac Children = Jacob, Esau.**

Genesis 25.

- Abraham takes another wife **Keturah** (*Abraham's concubine 1Croniclesh 1:32*).
- The Death Of Abraham.
- Ishmal's Decendants.
- The Death Of Ishmael .
- The Births Of Jacob And Esau.
- Esau Sells His Birthright.

Genesis 26.

- Conflict Over Water Rights.
- A Treaty With Abimelech.

Genesis 27.

- Jacob Steals Esau's Blessing.
- Jacob Flees.

Genesis 28.

- Jacob's Dream At Bethel.
- Jacob Flees to Paddan-Aram

Genesis 29

- Jacob Arrives At Paddan-Arom
- Jacob Marries Leah And Rachel
- Jacob's Many Children

Genesis 30

- Jacob's Wealth Increases

#### Genesis 31

- Jacob Flees From Laban
- Laban Pursues Jacob
- Jacob's Treaty With Laban

#### Genesis 32

- Jacob Sends Gifts To Esau
- Jacob Wrestles With God

#### Genesis 33

- Jacob And Esau Make Peace

#### Genesis 34

- Revenge Against Shechem  
Simion and Levi avenge sister's rape

#### Genesis 35.

- Jacob's Return To Bethel.
- Rachel's Sons **Benjamin, Joseph.**
- Leah's Sons **Reuben**, Simeon, Levi, Judan, Issachar, Zebulun.  
Reuben slept with Jacob's concubine.
- The Death Of Rachel And Isaac.

#### Genesis 36.

- Descendants Of Esauel.
- Original People Of Edom.
- Rulers Of Edom.

#### Genesis 37.

- Joseph's Dreams.
- Joseph Sold Into Slavery.

#### Genesis 38.

- Joseph And Tamar.

#### Genesis 39.

- Joseph In Potiphar's House.
- Joseph Put In Prison.

#### Genesis 40.

- Joseph Interprets Two Dreams.

Genesis 41.

- Pharaoh's Dreams.
- Joseph Made Ruler Of Egypt.
- Joseph's sons **Manasseh, Ephraim.**

Genesis 42.

- Joseph's Brothers Go To Egypt.

Genesis 43.

- The Brothers Return To Egypt.
- A Feast At Joseph's Palace.

Genesis 44.

- Joseph's Silver Cup.
- Judah Speaks For His Brothers.

Genesis 45.

- Joseph Reveals His Identity.
- Pharaoh Invites Jacob To Egypt.

Genesis 46.

- Joseph Reveals Journey To Egypt.
- Jacob's Family Arrives In Goshen.

Genesis 47.

- Jacob Blesses Pharaoh.
- Joseph's Leadership In The Famine.

Genesis 48.

- Jacob Blesses Manasseh And Ephraim.

Genesis 49.

- Jacob Blesses His Sons.

Genesis 50.

- Joseph Reassures His Brothers.
- The Death Of Joseph.



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**Lesson1 Life Questions.**

Lesson 1 - .

1) **Genesis 1:28.**

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

**Genesis 2:15.**

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

**What was Adam's mandate to oversee creation? .....** To dress and keep the garden  
Dress -Agriculture, Tools, Music and A

Lesson 2 – Human Close up (*Genesis 2*).

1) **Genesis 2:7.**

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

**If you could design a paradise, what would it look like?**



2) **Genesis 1:27.**

So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Additional scripture for second question.

**What is meant by the image of God?.....**A mirror so that God could see something of himself in u  
**Is it limited to physical attributes?**

Lesson 3 – The Crash (*Genesis 3*).

1) **Genesis 3:3.**

But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

2) **Gen 2:17.**

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

**Have you ever felt hemmed in or stifled at one of God's commands. How did you respond?**

Lesson 4 – Crouching At The Door (*Genesis 4:1-24*)

1) **Genesis 4:9**

And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

What would say if God appeared in person to confront you over some sin?  
It depends on what she looks like!

Lesson 5 – Under Water (*Genesis 7*).

1) **Genesis 7:4.**

For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

Many people have the idea that human nature is basically good. Do you agree?

**Psalms 51:5**

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

**1 John 1:10**

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

**1 John 3:9**

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Lesson 6 – New Start (*Genesis 8:1 – 9:7*).

1) **Genesis 8:21.**

And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

What does God's covenant with Noah teach about the uniqueness of human life.

Lesson 7 – The Plan (*Genesis 15*).

1) **Genesis 15:1-2.**

- 1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.
- 2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

Do people still rely on covenants or contracts today?

What purpose do they serve?

Lesson 8 – Sodom And Gomorrah (*Genesis 19*).

1) **Genesis 19:13.**

For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

Are any catastrophes of our time punishments from God?  
How would you know?

Lesson 9 – Final Exam (*Genesis 22:1-19*).

1) **Genesis 22:2.**

For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

What is the hardest test of faith that you have ever been through?

Lesson 10 – The Cheater (*Genesis 27:1-38*).

1) **Genesis 27:36.**

And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

In Old Testament times names like Isaac: laughter or Jacob: grasper carried great significance. What kind of descriptive name would fit you?

Lesson 11 – Something Undeserved (*Genesis 28:10-22; 32:22-32*).

1) **Genesis 28:15.**

And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

Not many people have such dramatic encounters with God. How has God met you at a time of need?

Lesson 12 – Blood Brothers (*Genesis 37*).

1) **Genesis 37:20.**

Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

Have you ever experienced God bringing good out of what at first seemed like a disaster?

Lesson 13 – Behind The Scenes (*Genesis 41:1-43*).

1) **Genesis 41:15-16.**

15 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.

16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, *It is* not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

If God has an important message for you, how does he get it across or get your attention so that you will understand it?

Lesson 14 – A Long Forgiveness (*Genesis 45:1 - 46:4*)

1) Genesis 45:4-5.

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

2) Matthew 18:21.

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me?

What makes it so hard for us to forgive others?

Lesson 2

1) Exodus 3:11-12.

Like Moses, do you ever wonder if shortcomings you perceive about yourself disqualify you from God's service?

2) Exodus 11:10.

Like Egypt, if God declared war on the gods of our modern society, what would they be?

3) Exodus 15:1-18.

How does the song commemorating the event of the Egyptians drowning in the sea offer a good model for thanking God (Exodus 15:1-18)?

4) Exodus 20:20.

Can you restate some of the negative forms of the Ten Commandments positively?

What personal rights do they protect?

1. No other gods
2. No idols
3. Do not misuse God's name
4. Keep the Sabbath
5. Honor your father & mother
6. Do not commit adultery
7. Do not steal
8. Do not give false testimony
9. Do not covet

5) Exodus 32:31-32.

What do you think was really behind the Israelites rebellion?

Boredom, impatience, jealousy or rebellion

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Lesson1 Reflective Questions.

OLD TESTAMENT FOUNDATIONS LESSON ONE  
**Reflection Question from Outline Point IID**

Explain how knowing about the Hebrew word yom will help people understand Genesis.

This word can denote different measurements of time. It can mean 24 hours, a day, a certain period of time, or a whole year. This is important as we look at the seven days of creation. The length of these creative days is not stated. It could be 24-hour days or long extended days.

As a Christian, it is easy for me to believe that God can work through any pure scientific method or model to expose the physical nature of His Creation. I don't see that faith and science intrinsically contradict each other or need to be reconciled. The Christian faith concerns itself with the rock of ages. Science concerns itself with the age of rocks. Although there seems to be a nature asks what is the relationship between the Creation story in Genesis and the natural laws science relies on, faith and science are, by the nature of their pursuits, non-overlapping magistrates. The story of Genesis was not written with the intention to answer the questions that science asks, nor does pure science claim to answer the core questions that are raised by faith. It is only when faith enters the realm of empirical scientific evidence and science enters the realm of interpretation of life's meaning that conflicts arise.

I would appeal to the orderliness of the universe as a means to bridge the gap between faith and science. As William Paley argued in his famous "Watchmaker" argument, there is evidence of a Creator in the created order of the universe. Both faith and science appeal to the existence and necessity of causal laws to assert theories concerning the natural order of the universe and its creation.

As for the apparent contradictions, we need to examine presuppositions made by both faith and science that may be fallacious. Evolution is often viewed as synonymous with science. A question to explore is whether or not the claims of evolution qualify as pure empirical and quantifiable science or are such claims driven by an alternative agenda of imposing a godless humanism and naturalism. A similar question can be asked of creationism.

Is it based on sound scientific theory and methodology or is it rooted in a particular textual interpretation-forcing the scientific evidence to conform to a theological interpretation? Both creationists and evolutionists claim to have evidence that their theories are scientific. However, both begin with presuppositions that skew the evidence in a particular direction so that the conclusions appear contradictory.

My overall approach might be to find areas of commonality between the Genesis story and science. Both science and faith seek to find a unified theory of creation that is based

on what is known. I propose an approach that points out evidences that are shared by both, rather than seeing science as anti-God or faith as anti-rational. Science is basically an assertion and testing of theories, which do not necessitate a negation of Christianity or the Creation story. Science can be a tool to help Christians discover more about the nature of God's Creation. But ultimately, for God to be God, he must stand above and exist outside the constraints of natural science and not be bound by it.

## OLD TESTAMENT FOUNDATIONS - LESSON ONE

### Reflection Question from Outline Point XIII

Three-part question:

- a) Now that you have examined the highlights of Genesis, what verse would you consider to be the key verse in the book?
- b) Write 1 list of key words and phrases.
- c) In your own words, what is the theme of Genesis?

- a) "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" -Genesis 1:1  
"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them:-Genesis 1:27

"And the Lord God said, The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.' So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken."-Genesis 12:1-3

- b) God created; Let there be.... God saw that it was good; the image of God; "Did God really say': Cain and Abel; Noah and the Flood; Abraham and Sarah; "I will make you into a great nation"; Abraham believe the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness: Hagar and Ishmael; "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son"; Isaac and Rebekah; Jacob and Esau; the older will serve the younger; deceiver; Joseph's dreams; Pharaoh's dreams; "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."
- d) The theme of Genesis is the origin of God's chosen people, demonstrating God's faithfulness to His children.



## OLD TESTAMENT FOUNDATIONS LESSON ONE

### Reflection Question from Outline Point XII2

Two-part question:

- a) What does Genesis teach about the sins of human beings? What kinds of sins stand out in the Genesis account
  - b) What are the practical applications of these teachings? b) What traits of godly living are manifested in the stories of Genesis?
- a) Early in Genesis, we find the sad description of human beings first sins: Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This account teaches that the consequences of these sins were grave indeed: Adam and Eve became mortal, were evicted from the Garden of Eden, the earth was cursed, and humanity was destined to a life of pain and toil.
- From there we see a steady parade of sins: Cain murders his brother Abel; people become so wicked that only Noah's family is spared from the Flood; people proudly attempt to build the Tower of Babel; finally Abram was called to leave a culture of idolatry. The type of sin that stands out to me from the patriarchs was deception. Out of fear, first Abraham and later his son Isaac claim that their wives are their sisters. Jacob deceives his brother Esau in order to gain both the oldest sons' birthright and blessing. ....then deceives his father-in-law Laban (as does his wife Rachel as well). Joseph's brother lash out at Joseph and sell into slavery, deceiving their father into thinking that an animal killed Joseph.
- A practical application of Genesis' teachings about sin is that, unfortunately, we all have to fight it. Genesis provides numerous examples of that reality; \*WI the New Testament directly states that we have inherited a sinful nature from Adam and Eve's "fall. On the positive side, the account of their fall includes the hope of redemption. The Lord told the serpent that the woman's offspring would crush his head (3:15)-a promise fulfilled in Christ's victory over Satan.
- b) Despite the scars of sin found in Genesis. I also see testimonies of godly living in this book. God was pleased with Abel and his desire to bring offerings before the Lord. In the midst of a sinful world, Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God" (6:9). Enoch also walked with God, and was "taken away' to the Lord's presence without encountering death (5:24). Of course, Abraham and Sarah's steadfast faith is celebrated as a great model for us. For all his faults, Jacob was a true worshiper of God, one time even persisting to "wrestle" with God until he was rewarded with God's blessing (33:22-29). In my opinion, Joseph is probably the best example in Genesis of godly living. So many terrible things - happened to him, usually at the hand of others, but he never became bitter or vengeful. He also resisted temptations of sexual immorality with Potiphar's wife) and personal pride and ego (when he was elevated to second-in-command in Egypt).